CLAIMS:

1. A method for the treatment of inflammatory bowel disease comprising administering to a mammal suffering from inflammatory bowel disease a composition comprising an anti-VLA-4 antibody.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the anti-VLA-4 antibody composition is administered intravenously.

3. The method of Claim 1, wherein the anti-VLA-4 antibody is selected from the group consisting of HP1/2, HP2/1, HP2/4, L25, and P4C2.

4. The method of Claim 1, wherein the anti-VLA-4 antibody is HP1/2, or a fragment thereof capable of binding to VLA-4.

5. The method of Claim 1, wherein the composition is administered at a dosage so as to provide from 0.05 to 5.0 mg/kg of antibody, based on the weight of the inflammatory bowel disease sufferer.

6. The method of Claim 5, wherein the composition is administered at a dosage so as to provide 0.5 to 2.0 mg/kg of antibody, based on the weight of the inflammatory bowel disease sufferer.

7. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the composition is administered in an amount effective to provide a plasma level of antibody in the mammal of 10-15 μg/ml.

8. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the mammal is a human.

9. The method of Claim 8, wherein the mammal suffers from ulcerative colitis.

10. The method of Claim 8, wherein the mammal suffers from Crohn's Disease.

11. The method of Claim 1, wherein the composition is administered during an acute flareup of the inflammatory bowel disease.

12. A method for the treatment of inflammatory bowel disease comprising administering to a mammal suffering from inflammatory bowel disease an antibody, a recombinant antibody, a chimeric antibody, fragments of such antibodies, a polypeptide or a small molecule capable of binding to the α_4 subunit of VLA-4, or combinations of any of the foregoing, in an amount effective to provide relief to said mammal.

13. The method of Claim 12, wherein the antibody, polypeptide or molecule is selected from monoclonal antibody HP1/2; Fab, Fab', $F(ab')_2$ or F(v) fragments of such antibody; soluble VCAM-1 polypeptides; or small molecules that bind to the VCAM-1-binding domain of VLA-4.

14. The method of Claim 12, wherein the composition comprises a plurality of anti-VLA-4 monoclonal antibodies or VLA-4-binding fragments thereof.

15. The method of Claim 12, wherein the composition includes, in addition to anti-VLA-4, an anti-ELAM-1 antibody, an anti-ICAM-1 antibody, an anti-VCAM-1 antibody, an anti-CDX antibody, an anti-LFA-1 antibody, an anti-CD18 antibody or combinations of any such antibodies.

16. The method of Claim 12, wherein the anti-VLA-4 antibody is HP1/2, or a fragment thereof capable of binding to VLA-4.

17. The method of Claim 12, wherein the composition is administered at a dosage so as to provide from 0.05 to 5.0 mg/kg of antibody, antibody fragment, polypeptide or small molecule, based on the weight of the inflammatory bowel disease sufferer.

18. The method of Claim 17, wherein the composition is administered at a dosage so as to provide 0.5 to 2.0 mg/kg of antibody, antibody fragment, polypeptide or small molecule, based on the weight of the inflammatory bowel disease sufferer.

19. The method according to Claim 12, wherein the composition is administered in an amount effective to provide a plasma level of antibody in the mammal of 10-15 μg/ml.

20. A pharmaceutical composition for the treatment of inflammatory bowel disease consisting essentially of a monoclonal antibody recognizing VLA-4 in a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

21. A method for the treatment of inflammatory bowel disease comprising administering to a mammal suffering from inflammatory bowel disease a composition comprising anti-VLA-4 antibody HP1/2 or a fragment thereof capable of binding to VLA-4.